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A STUDY OF EMPLOYMENT POLICIES IN DOWNTOWN HOTEL
DINING ROOMS AND COFFEE SHOPS

Submitted to the

Human Rights Commissioners and
Ontario Status of Women Council

by

Janet McMurtry

Pam McGibbon

(Student Officers)

August 15, 1978



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A STUDY OF EMPLOYMENT POLICIES IN DOWNTOWN HOTEL
DINING ROOMS AND COFFEE SHOPS

Below is a study done on employment in the more legitimate and
standardized to the first class dining rooms, coffee shops and
hotels in the city of the Ontario Human Rights Code which
prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex.

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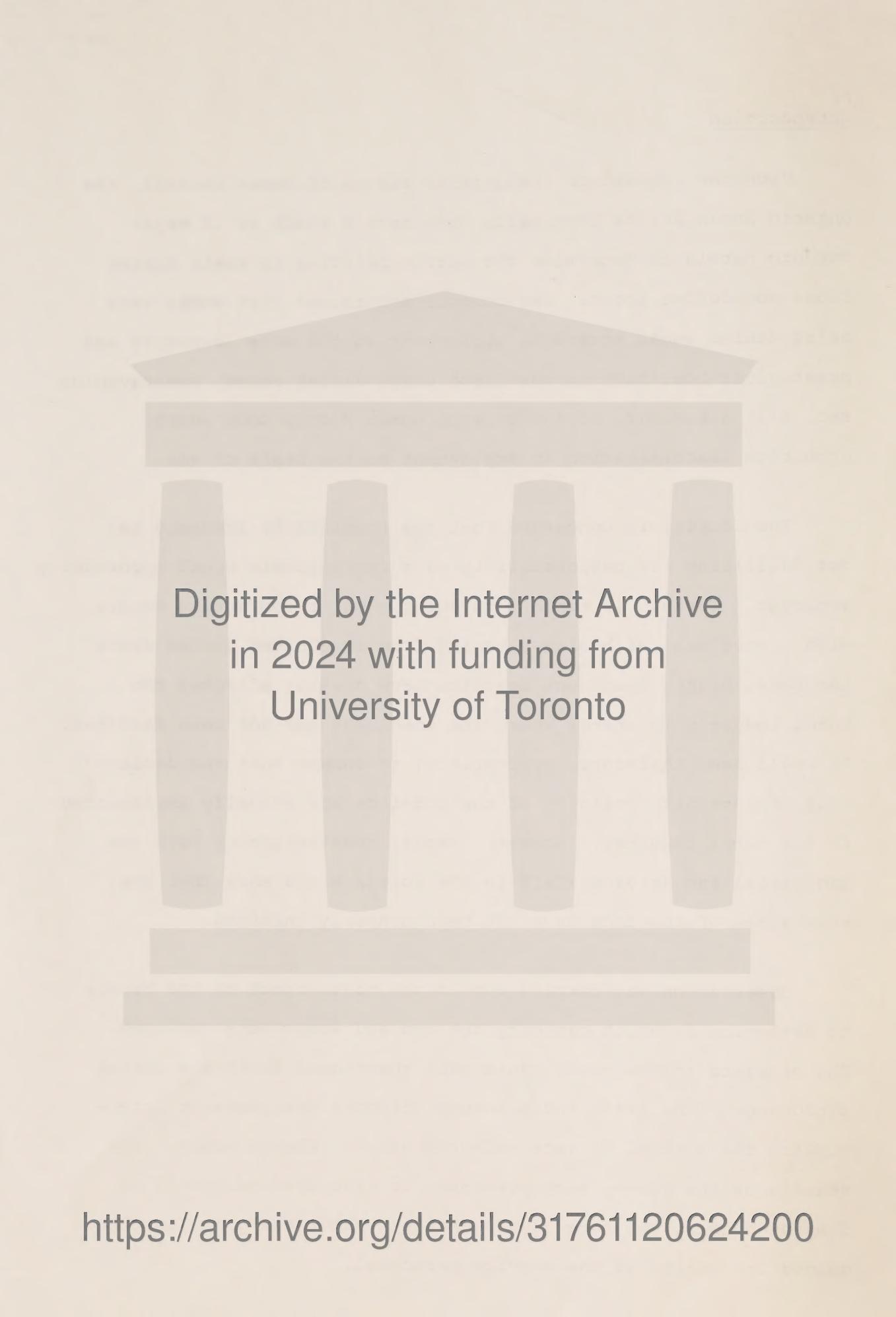
August 15, 1978

Introduction

Upon the request of the Ontario Status of Women Council, the Ontario Human Rights Commission undertook a study of 20 major Toronto hotels to determine the hiring policies in their dining rooms and coffee shops. The Council maintained that women were being denied equal access to employment in the more lucrative and prestigious positions in the first class dining rooms, contravening sec. 4(1) a,b,c,e,f, of the Ontario Human Rights Code which prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex.

The Council is concerned that the hospitality industry is not fulfilling its responsibility as a recognizable equal opportunity employer. Toronto is rapidly becoming a major convention centre with a good deal of business coming from the United States where the Equal Rights Amendment boycotts have greatly affected the hotel industry in states where the amendment has not been ratified. It would seem therefore, appropriate, to ensure that the declared equal opportunity policies of the province are actually implemented in the hotel industry. However, casual observation of both the managerial and service staff in the hotels would show that the provisions of the Code have not been properly enforced.

Observation was carried out in the restaurants of the hotels to determine in which capacity the men and women were employed. The managers of the restaurants were questioned about the duties performed by the staff and although attempts were made at interviewing the latter, we were referred back to the managers. The results of the survey were presented to executive personnel of 5 major hotels, who were then questioned about the policies that guided the hiring of the service personnel.



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Results of the Visual Survey

- almost without exception waiters only were employed in the first class restaurants
- hostesses were only occasionally employed in these restaurants
- many more waitresses were employed in the coffee shops than waiters
- it was observed that although the degree of skill involved was quite different in the two restaurants, the volume of work was similar
- the researchers were told by coffee shop hostesses that waiters and bus boys were being trained there for positions in the better restaurants in the hotel while the waitresses were not
- the officers were told by several maitre d's that the special skills required for service in the first class hotels were taught to the waiters on the job
- although a specific study wasn't done to determine what each waiter and waitress earned per day in tips, the researchers were able to conclude by observing the customer turnover and by knowing the price of the meals, that the service staff in the coffee shops would never be able to earn as much in gratuities as their counterparts in the dining rooms

Management Attitudes

- many years of experience and the knowledge of "French service" are the most common requirements for service positions in the first class restaurants
- "French service" has traditionally been performed by a male
- patrons of the restaurant would respond negatively to a change in tradition
- the shortage of qualified waitresses is responsible for the absence of waitresses in these restaurants
- women applicants are more interested in cocktail waitressing which is very lucrative but not terribly prestigious and does not involve food service training
- women never specifically request positions in the dining rooms but prefer to remain in the coffee shops where the work is easier
- women regard waitressing a short-term employment whereas men regard it as a profession
- women are unstable in employment, often absent due to family responsibilities and do not want to work split shifts which is necessary in the better restaurants
- although management much prefers to promote within the hotel, time and effort is not put into training the female employees

for the better positions because the women do not stay on long enough to justify the expense

- higher customer turnover in the coffee shops and more regular tipping result in waitresses making more in tips than their counterparts in the dining rooms
- management is reluctant to have males and females working together in the same positions fearing that it would lead to conflicts

Conclusion

Although the executive personnel of the 5 hotels studied repeatedly stated that they would hire well qualified and experienced women for their first class restaurants, no concerted ongoing attempt has ever been made by any of the hotels to recruit or train women for this type of work. Also no explanation was given by the executive personnel as to why years of food service experience were required in their first class restaurants when all of the hotels had training programs, and further why these programs appear to be only open to men.

Therefore, the researchers recommend:

- that the hotels be strongly encouraged to adopt Affirmative Action policies to ensure that in the future women are given an equal opportunity to receive on-the-job training which would enable them to qualify for promotion

- that the hotels be made to realize that as "ambassadors" for the city and the province for many visitors who may not be able to witness any other facet of Canadian life, it is very important that they be and are seen to be equal opportunity employers
- that policies ensuring women are not discriminated against in hiring and promotion be added to the policies of the Hotel and Club Employees Union and the Restaurant and Hotel Association
- that the community colleges make a positive effort to develop courses aimed at training men and women in international first class standards of food service and that they make every effort to place graduates
- that women wishing to make food service a career be encouraged to look upon it as a profession and should make it clear to management that they regard it as such
- that the Women's Bureau design a pamphlet outlining the required skills of the profession and how and where they may be acquired
- that the Ontario Human Rights Commission with a representative from the Ontario Status of Women Council and the Women's Bureau convene with the presidents and/or general managers of the downtown hotels to discuss this study and its recommendations

